What is claimed is:

1. A starter for an internal combustion engine comprising:

an armature made up of an armature shaft, a core, and coils, the core being made of a laminate of plates and installed on the armature shaft, the core having a first and a second end opposed to each other, the coils being disposed therearound and defining a surface commutator on the first end thereof, the surface commutator having an inner periphery formed therein; and

a first and a second ball bearing, disposed close to the first and second ends, supporting the armature shaft rotatably, the first ball bearing being disposed within the inner periphery of the surface commutator.

2. A starter as set forth in claim 1, wherein said first and second ball bearings have inner peripheries fitted on the armature shaft and outer peripheries fitted on a frame surrounding said armature.

3. A starter as set forth in claim 1, wherein said commutator includes a conductor coil that is a portion of the coils of said armature.

4. A starter as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a thrust applying mechanism working to apply thrust to the first and second ball bearings to minimize clearances in the first and second ball bearings.

5. A starter as set forth in claim 4, wherein said thrust applying mechanism includes an elastic member working to apply a spring pressure to brushes used to supply power to the surface commutator.

6. A starter as set forth in claim 4, wherein said thrust applying mechanism includes a spring working to apply a spring pressure to brushes used to supply power to the surface commutator and a disc spring working to apply a spring pressure to the first and second bearings.

7. A starter as set forth in claim 1, wherein the first and second ball bearings are implemented by angular contact ball bearings.

8. A starter as set forth in claim 7, wherein each of the angular contact ball bearings has an outer and an inner ring at least one of which is made by pressing a plate.

9. A starter as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a planetary reduction mechanism disposed within a starter housing, an output shaft, and a pinion stalled on the output shaft, said planetary reduction mechanism working to reduce speed of said armature and transmit it to the output shaft.

10. A starter as set forth in claim 1, further comprising a

cylindrical yoke, frames, a reduction mechanism, and a brush holder, the yoke including magnetic poles made of permanent magnets or electromagnets, the frames being so disposed on sides of the yoke as to surround said armature, the reduction mechanism working to transmit torque of said armature to an output shaft, the reduction mechanism and the brushes being installed outside the frames and the yoke.